



Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

www.highlands.state.nj.us

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Highlands Council Announces \$450,000 In Available Agriculture Grant Monies

Chester, NJ – Highlands Region municipalities and counties can apply for Sustainable Agriculture Grants newly available through the work of the Highlands Council. The available pool for this round of funding is \$450,000.

The grant program is designed to promote sustainable agriculture within the frame work of protecting the Highlands Region's valuable and limited water supply. The agricultural grants will concentrate on assisting the agriculture community by funding programs focusing in three areas: 1) integrated crop management, 2) market development, and 3) farmland preservation.

Integrated crop management is an innovative approach to pest management and nutrient management with the goal of minimizing weeds, insects and disease, in an environmentally sensitive way.

Market development will create new product markets and opportunities within the Region and its counties.

Farmland preservation funds will be made available to County Agriculture Development Boards and used for purposes such as hiring staff to assist in land preservation outreach and processing; providing staff support for the county agricultural grant programs or developing educational materials or programs assisting municipalities in being farm friendly communities.

The eighty-eight Highlands municipalities, seven Highlands counties and County Agriculture Development Boards are encouraged to submit applications by January 1, 2007. Detailed guideline and the grant application can be found at the Highlands Council's website www.highlands.state.nj.us.

In August 2004, the New Jersey Legislature enacted the Highland Water Protection and Planning Act in order to protect over 850,000 acres which supply drinking water for more than sixty-five percent of New Jersey's residents. The Highlands Act created the Highlands Council as a regional planning entity charged with protecting the water resources and natural beauty of the New Jersey Highlands while allowing for planned, sustainable development and redevelopment of the region. The fifteen Council members include a broad and representative range of elected officials from Highlands municipalities and counties, as well as individuals with diverse backgrounds and area perspectives.

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